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**CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Office of Current Intelligence  
21 April 1965**

**INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM**

**Results of US Air Strikes in South Vietnam**

1. The majority of the US jet aircraft combat missions flown in South Vietnam to date have been in support of government-initiated ground operations of battalion strength or larger. On several occasions, however, strategic bombing operations have been undertaken, most recently against a Viet Cong stronghold in western Tay Ninh Province.

2. The expanded application of combat air power within South Vietnam through the use of US jets has spelled the difference between victory and defeat for government forces in a number of operations and has often been responsible for the majority of Viet Cong killed. Jet air support has enabled RVNAF units to conduct operations in areas into which they seldom before ventured. In addition, the employment of jet aircraft in the interdiction role has released more USAF and VNAF Sky-raidiers for close air support and airborne alert missions.

3. US jet aircraft were first used in combat in South Vietnam on 19 February 1965, when 27 B-57s and four F-100s bombed 13 targets in Phuoc Tuy Province. The results of this action were not observed. In the week that followed, the majority

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[redacted]

of a total of 195 jet sorties were flown against selected targets in Phuoc Tuy and Binh Tuy provinces. Again, no confirmed results were reported.

4. On 5 March, eight USAF F-100s furnished close air support for five ARVN battalions against an estimated Viet Cong battalion and one local force Viet Cong company in Quang Tin Province. Ground forces reported several secondary explosions, and attributed 50 guerrillas killed and 23 structures destroyed to air strikes. On 7 March, eight B-57s and four F-100s bombed and strafed an estimated concentration of 600 Viet Cong in Kontum Province. Ground forces later entered the area and discovered 70 guerrillas had been killed by air action.

5. On 21 March, 24 B-57s, accompanied by 19 USAF A-1Es, flew strikes against a Viet Cong secret base area in Kien Giang Province. Approximately 900 guerrillas and 250 structures were reported to be in the area. ARVN IV Corps G-2 claimed 100 Viet Cong killed and 145 structures destroyed or damaged by B-57 assaults. On 22 March, four USAF F-100s executed interdiction missions against an estimated two Communist battalions south of Da Nang in Quang Nam Province, destroying or damaging 60 structures.

6. On 23 March, 12 US B-57s attacked a Viet Cong command post and Viet Cong troop concentrations in Binh Tuy Province. The results of the mission were unobserved by the pilots; however, [redacted] 100 guerrillas had been killed by the air strikes. An ARVN soldier who escaped from the Viet Cong reported 50 guerrillas killed by four B-57 sorties flown in Kontum Province on 24 March. During an operation conducted in Kontum Province during 26-31 March, US B-57s, accompanied by American and Vietnamese Skyraiders, enabled a trapped ARVN Ranger battalion to extricate itself from a Viet Cong encirclement by continuous bombing and strafing of enemy positions.

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7. On 28 March, the senior US military adviser to ARVN IV Corps reported 119 Viet Cong killed as the result of air strikes conducted by nine B-57s and 31 A-1Es against a secret guerrilla base camp in Kien Hoa Province. On 31 March, more than 100 US and Vietnamese aircraft, including a considerable number of B-57s, conducted a large-scale napalm bombardment operation against the 50-mile-square Boi Loi Forest, a long-time Viet Cong stronghold about 50 miles northwest of Saigon. The operation was termed a failure by MACV, however, largely because the wind was not blowing hard enough to spread the fire.

8. During a search-and-destroy operation conducted in Quang Tin Province from 31 March to 2 April, the combined efforts of US B-57s and F-100s, supported by American and Vietnamese Skyraiders, accounted for approximately 200 of an estimated 340 Viet Cong killed. In addition, 52 enemy structures were destroyed. In Chuong Thien Province, US B-57s and US F-100s supported a task force of two ARVN regiments in a major engagement against two main force Viet Cong battalions near the U-Minh Forest during 4-6 April. The Viet Cong suffered 278 killed, the great majority of which MACV attributed to air strikes.

9. On 8 April, 31 B-57s and 32 F-100s engaged in a day-long bombardment against the possible deployed elements of the PAVN 325th Division in the northwest corner of Kontum Province near the Laotian border. Pilot reports confirm 14 structures destroyed and eight damaged; other results were obscured by dense foliage and tree cover.

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10. On 15 April, 230 US and Vietnamese aircraft, including 50 B-57s, 79 F-100s, and 16 Marine F4Bs flew 443 attack sorties against the main Viet Cong headquarters in War Zone C in

western Tay Ninh Province. An estimated 862 tons of bombs were expended in the systematic saturation bombing of an area three kilometers by six kilometers. Visibility over the target area was poor; however, six secondary explosions were reported, suggesting the demolition of ammunition storage areas, and at least 15 structures and one large permanent installation were destroyed.

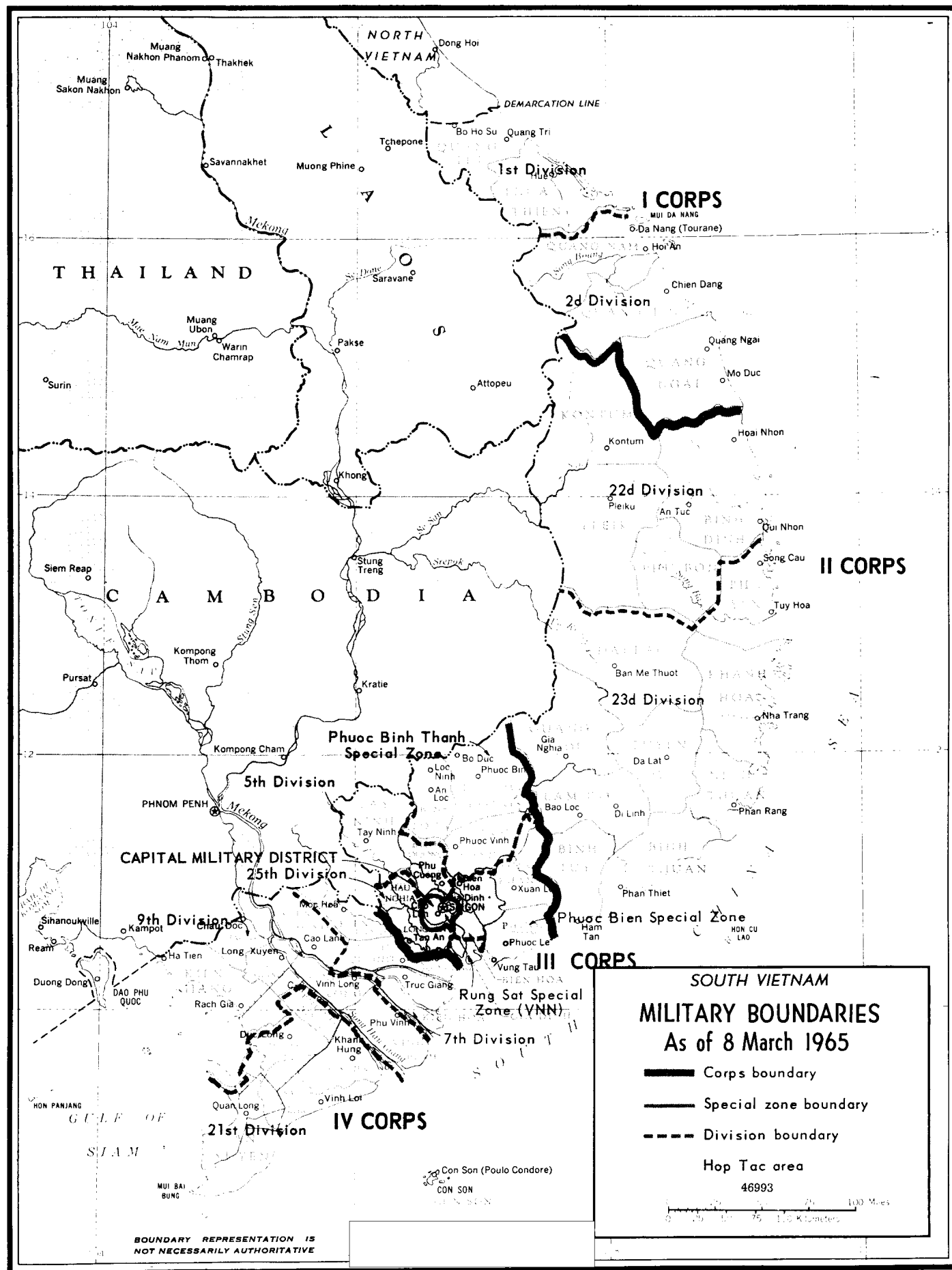
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11. Three battalions of ARVN troops conducted a sweep operation of this strike zone from 16 to 18 April but failed to establish contact with the Viet Cong. The ground forces did, however, recover a small amount of abandoned Viet Cong materiel, documents, and weapons.

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**TOTAL SORTIES FLOWN BY WEEK**

<b><u>B-57 Sorties</u></b>	<b><u>F-100 Sorties</u></b>	<b><u>Week Of</u></b>
43	4	14-20 February
167	28	21-27 February
48	8	28 February-6 March
95	12	7 March-13 March
142	19	14-20 March
119	54	21-27 March
89	63	28 March-3 April
66	118	4-10 April



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